

Last Letters from the Holocaust Graphic Organizer



Directions: Use the following graphic organizer to support your analysis of the Last Letters from the Holocaust primary source excerpt(s).

| Prompt | Your Response |
|---|---------------|
| Identify the speaker's name, date of birth, and/or other relevant information. What may have prompted the speaker to share this story? | |
| How did this individual demonstrate courage? | |
| How did others demonstrate courage to this individual during their experience? | |
| What role did individual choices play in the courage described in this letter? | |
| Reflect: Why is it often difficult to show courage? Reference specific examples from this letter to support your response. | |
| Reflect: Why are individual choices so important during opportunities to show courage? Reference specific examples from this letter to support your response. | |

Last Letters from the Holocaust Excerpts



STUDENT HANDOUT

Last Postcard from Elie Barsimantov

Elie Barsimantov wrote these words on the last postcard that he sent from Drancy to his wife Sarah in Paris.

Elie Barsimantov was born in 1900 in Smyrna (today Izmir) in Turkey. He immigrated to France in 1922 and settled in Paris. Elie earned his living in trade. Elie met Sarah Gabai, who was also born in Smyrna and immigrated to Paris with her parents. In 1935, Elie and Sarah got married, and a year later their son Jacques was born.

In September 1941, Elie was arrested in Paris and sent to the Drancy camp, where he was imprisoned until his deportation to Auschwitz in August 1942. His wife and son continued to live in Paris. Elie sent letters and postcards to Sarah from Drancy and received letters and parcels from her. Elie sent his last postcard a day before his deportation to Auschwitz

As you read, consider the individual courage required by Elie who chose to write to his family during this time of great distress and danger. Additionally, consider the courage of others mentioned in Elie's story, and how those acts of courage may have supported and supplemented Elie's courage:

"My dearest Sarah,

I am writing you this postcard to let you know that as per camp orders, I am leaving for work at an unknown destination.

I leave full of courage, and with God's help. I ask you not to worry, and to look after our dear son Jacques. I ask you to be strong and patient. We hope that with God's help all this will end and we will once again be joyfully reunited. Try to keep your spirits up. Don't send me any more letters or parcels to Drancy. Try to get the laundry that Mr. Saltiel is going to send you and please be brave.

Hugs to my sisters and to the families of my brother Albert, Vitalis and Raphael, and also to your family. All the bureaucratic efforts and attempts that you made on my behalf [to get me out of the camp] were fruitless, but I thank you.

I embrace you and our darling Jacques with all my strength.

I am leaving on Monday morning.

Elie"

The following link contains additional biographical information, context, and photographs of Elie Barsimantov and his last postcard. [23 August 1942: Drancy| Last Letters from the Holocaust \(yadvashem.org\)](https://www.yadvashem.org/en/education/teaching-tools/23-August-1942-Drancy-Last-Letters-from-the-Holocaust)

Last Letters from the Holocaust Excerpts



STUDENT HANDOUT

Letter from the Kishinev Ghetto

Ida Goldiș wrote these words in her last letter to her older sister Clara on the eve of her deportation from the Kishinev ghetto to Transnistria.

In October 1941, Ida Goldiș née Bidus was deported from the Kishinev ghetto to Transnistria, together with her little son Vili and her younger sister Doba. Her husband, Yosef, was in a Romanian army labor battalion.

Ida, Vili, and Doba were forced to make the arduous journey on foot together with the rest of the deportees from the ghetto. Ida and Doba took turns carrying Vili on their backs, using a special harness that they had sewn for him. In early 1942, the young child froze to death in the bitter cold, and his mother, who had lost the will to live, perished a few days later after drinking contaminated water. Ida was 24 when she perished, and Vili was just three years old.

Ida managed to smuggle the letter out of the ghetto via a non-Jewish messenger who worked with Doba in the bakery. The letter was given to Clara, who had remained in Romania. Clara and Doba (later Schwarz) survived.

As you read, consider the individual courage required by Ida who chose to write and smuggle this letter to her family during this time of great distress and danger. Additionally, consider the courage of others mentioned in Ida's story, and how those acts of courage may have supported and supplemented Ida's courage:

"Dear Clara,

Yesterday I sent you a postcard which, if you receive it, will cause you a great deal of sorrow.

I am writing to you now thanks to the good will of this gentleman, and I beg you not to tell mother the truth, since it is too awful and I do not want this matter to impair her health, which is poor anyway. My dear sister, for a few days a terrible danger has been hanging over our heads. We are being sent on foot to Ukraine for "resettlement" there (so they tell us). You can imagine our situation when we must go such a long way on foot, the weather being so cold, with a small child and with the few things which we will be able to carry along, that is to say, only food for the journey...I beg you not to spread this news in order not to bring any harm to this man of good will. My dear, please look after Mother, since you will be the only remaining member of her family... Goodbye, my darling sister, good luck to you, bring up your dear children in happiness and good health. Thousands of kisses on your sweet eyes. Does Revelina still remember me? May it be God's will that you soon see Carol again and that you live happily without worries and suffering. Kisses to Father and Mother, may they live in good health and enjoy better news. Doba and Vili send you thousands of kisses and a fond farewell.

Goodbye forever, all my thoughts are with you.

Ida"

The following link contains additional biographical information, context, and photographs of Ida Goldiș and her last letter. [9 October 1941: Kishinev Ghetto | Last Letters from the Holocaust \(yadvashem.org\)](https://www.yadvashem.org/en/education/teaching-tools/last-letters-from-the-holocaust/9-october-1941-kishinev-ghetto)

Demonstrating Courage Interview



STUDENT HANDOUT

Directions: Identify one individual in your family or community who you believe to be courageous. Interview that person using the prompts below, recording notes on their responses. Conclude by completing the reflection prompt at the end.

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|---|
| 1. What does courage mean to you? How would you define courage? |
| 2. Please describe a time when you feel that you demonstrated courage. |
| 3. Did you feel fear when you decided to show courage? If so, how did you overcome that fear? |
| 4. How would you say individual choices are related to courage? |
| 5. How can you recognize opportunities to show courage? |
| 6. What are other examples of courage in everyday life? |

Reflection: After your interview, provide a written reflection on how this activity has impacted your understanding of courage. In your reflection, describe examples of courage in different situations, referencing at least three pieces of evidence from the testimonies, *Last Letters from the Holocaust* excerpts, and your interview responses. Conclude with an explanation of the importance of individual choices when presented with opportunities to demonstrate courage and identify opportunities that you have to show courage to others in your community.